



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA Metropolitan Planning Organization

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of April 17, 2002
3:10 p.m. Greensboro, NC
County Commissioner's Briefing Room (Blue Room)
Old Guilford County Courthouse**

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair, City Council
Mayor Keith Holliday	City Council
Robbie Perkins	City Council
Don Vaughan	City Council
Doug Galyon	Board of Transportation
Bob Landreth	County Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair, GDOT	Brent McKinney	PART
Tyler Meyer	GDOT	Libby James	GTA
Jerry Dudeck	NCDOT - Statewide Planning	Jeff Sovich	GDOT
Tom Martin	Greensboro Planning	Craig McKinney	GDOT
Paul Muschick	Greensboro <i>News & Record</i>	Mike Mills	NCDOT
Jim Ayers	Town of Pleasant Garden		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at approximately 3:10 pm.

Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes of February 20, 2002

Don Vaughan moved for the approval of the February 20, 2002 minutes. Mayor Keith Holliday seconded the motion, which the Committee unanimously approved.

2. Memorandum of Agreement, Piedmont Triad Regional Travel Demand Model

Jeff Sovich advised the Committee that this memorandum of agreement establishes criteria and procedures for the development, use, and maintenance of the regional travel demand model. The four regional MPOs, PART, and NCDOT have collaboratively developed this agreement, which is regional in scope. It covers the area bounded by the four MPOs, which are Burlington/Graham, High Point, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County and Greensboro. He also advised the committee that this agreement marks the first time the Burlington/Graham MPO would be included in the model. The recommended action is for approval.

Don Vaughan moved for the approval of the model, seconded by Mayor Keith Holliday. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

Business Items

1. Guilford College Road Widening Project Scope Update

Mike Mills told the Committee that the project consists of two different sections, A and B. The A Section goes from High Point Road to Mackay Road. It was proposed to be four lanes divided by a grass median. Section B which also was proposed to be four lanes divided by a grass median, goes from Mackay Road and ties into Wendover.

Mills explained that property owners and area churches along the B Section have recently asked for a cross-over to permit U-turn and left turn movements. Spacing requirements in the right of way make this request almost impossible. Doug Galyon explained that he has requested a new study, to consider changing Section B's cross-section to five lanes with curb and gutter, while keeping the grass median in Section A. He has spoken with Debbie Barbour concerning these changes. Ms. Barbour indicated that any change will delay the completion of Section B, and that there are traffic safety issues as well. Any change would have to go through the MPO for their approval. Mr. Galyon stated that any delay that resulted would be worthwhile to achieve a more desirable solution. The current schedule for Section B is for right-of-way acquisition to begin in 2003 and construction to begin in 2005. Ms. Barbour will present the findings at the May meeting of the Board of Transportation. NCDOT will update the TAC and TCC at the June meetings. Mr. Mills advised that Section A should be under construction in 2003.

2. Amend 2002-2008 MTIP: PART Regional Park and Ride Lots

Jeff Sovich advised the Committee that PART was recently awarded CMAQ funds by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The purpose of the funding is to construct five regional park-and-ride lots, intended to support regional and local transit service and to enhance multi-modal travel options throughout the region. This item would involve an amendment to the MTIP. The recommended action would be for the TAC to adopt this amendment at the May meeting.

3. Amend 2002-2008 MTIP: PART Unfunded Capital Projects, FY 2003

Jeff Sovich informed the Committee that the PART unfunded capital needs list consists of projects for which FTA discretionary funds are sought. Guidance from the Federal Transit Administration specifies that unfunded projects listed in the 5309 Program should include only those items for which local

matching funds are assured, thus, it should be a list of realistic projects, rather than an unconstrained “wish list.” This list covers fiscal year 2003, and would be amended into the current MTIP. The funding award for Section 5309 should be known within the next two weeks. The follow-up for this item would be to approve an amendment at the May meeting.

4. PART Unfunded Capital Project listing for 2004 – 2010 MTIP

Jeff Sovich commented that these projects also seek FTA discretionary funds, but this would be from various sources including section 5307, section 5309, and others. The first two years of this list are under current funding consideration. The more costly projects are listed in the later years. This item will be considered for inclusion in the draft 2004 – 2010 MTIP, which is currently being prepared. The follow-up would be to consider and reach a general concurrence on this item at the May meeting.

Brent McKinney made additional comments regarding the above-mentioned projects. He advised that the ride sharing and van-pooling program would expand its fleet every other year, beginning in 2003 with \$125,000 and ending in 2009 with \$135,000. Three to five 9 passenger or 15 passenger vans could be purchased during each expansion year.

He also commented on potential park-and-ride lot locations. He added that the lots would be located between Winston-Salem and the central terminal, High Point and Highway 68 corridor, near the terminal and in Greensboro. Mr. McKinney also informed the Committee that approximately 1.7 acres would be needed for each park-and-ride lot, which would provide 100 spaces. The time line for this project is approximately 2 years.

Sandy Carmany asked for why MPO action on PART projects was required. Following some discussion, Tyler Meyer clarified that although PART is responsible for coordinating transportation planning throughout the Triad region, the MPO is responsible for adopting the Metropolitan TIP, and PART projects are just like any other federally funded surface transportation project in that they must be included in an adopted TIP to move forward.

Mayor Holliday asked about progress towards locating a central PART bus hub in the airport area. Mr. McKinney noted recent progress. A potentially suitable site has been located, and discussions broached with the property owner. Approximately \$400,000 in PART improvements to the site would be required to bring it to a functional state. The site location and potential lease arrangement appeared advantageous to Mr. McKinney, and he intended to take it to the PART Board for further consideration. Discussion ensued, including the fact that if PART were to lose its revenue source following next year’s Board of County Commissioners’ review, then improvements made by PART would be forfeited with the site. Mayor Holliday asked whether it would be possible for the city to assume the lease or purchase the property. McKinney replied that the property is not currently for sale, but that the city could assume the lease, or simply lease the property itself, and sub-let it to PART. Mayor Holliday asked why a rail site was not chosen. McKinney explained that there were no suitable rail-accessible properties currently available, but that such a site would be identified at such time as future rail transit projects are approved for design by the FTA.

Robbie Perkins asked if the process of approving the PART projects could be expedited. Tyler Meyer observed TAC could act on the MTIP amendments at this meeting. Don Vaughan moved to amend the MTIP to include the park-and-ride lot projects, seconded by Mayor Keith Holliday, and the Committee unanimously approved. Don Vaughan moved to amend the MTIP for the unfunded capital projects fiscal year 2003. Mayor Holliday seconded the motion, which the Committee unanimously approved.

5. Report on the MPO Priority Needs Session

Tyler Meyer reported on the recent MPO Priority Needs Session. MPO officials, Doug Galyon, and NCDOT staff met to discuss the TIP status of area roadway projects, and the overall state of the transportation budget. He noted that TEA-21 established a guaranteed funding floor for the federal-aid highway program for 1998 – 2003 as well as a *Revenue Aligned Budget Authority* mechanism to correlate federal highway trust fund outlays with receipts. For previous years, RABA has led to funding levels substantially above the guaranteed baseline amount. However this year's economic downturn has led to a shortfall of approximately \$94 million in North Carolina alone. At the state level, available highway trust funds continue to outpace the availability of constructible "highway trust fund eligible" projects. Also, the highway trust fund is NCDOT's primary source of state funds to match federal highway program funds. Trust fund restrictions require that each dollar of trust fund money used to match federal aid be compensated by a dollar of federal aid on a trust fund eligible project. This further diminishes the availability of federal aid. The significance of this is that funds are available for trust fund projects such as the Greensboro Urban Loop, but are constrained for many of the MPO priority projects. Legislative action would be required to improve the situation. Meyer noted that the state legislature took positive steps in this direction last session by increasing the amount of state funding available for the operation and maintenance of transit systems such as GTA.

Doug Galyon noted that Secretary Tippet plans to request a bill to allow more flexibility for the use of the Highway Trust Fund money. Eighty percent of the money available at this time is in the Highway Trust Fund, yet trust fund-eligible projects comprise only about 20% of the needs. Conversely, 80% of the needs come from projects that are not trust fund-eligible, while only 20% of the money is available to fund those needs.

Mr. Galyon informed the Committee that as it currently stands, the state would receive \$620 million in federal highway funding. The Highway Funding Restoration Act, currently before Congress would override RABA and reinstate North Carolina's federal highway funds to their guaranteed baseline level of approximately \$704 million. Jim Westmoreland stated that the Committee could prepare a resolution and distribute it among the members for approval in support of this bill. The resolution would then be sent to the appropriate federal legislators. Mayor Holliday moved for the approval of the resolution; Bob Landreth seconded. The Committee voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

6. MPO Planning Updates

Bridford Parkway Extension – Tyler Meyer gave an update on the Bridford Parkway Extension project, which is an MPO priority project scheduled for completion by 2007. The Environmental Assessment phase, which includes a Community Impact Assessment, is currently under way. As part of the CIA process, an initial public meeting was held last July. A second public meeting was held with area residents in March to give them the opportunity to review the proposed improvements, ask questions, and make comments. The residents expressed the general sentiment that they had been taken advantage of by a local land speculator, and that as a result, curb and gutter have not been installed on their streets and municipal water supply has not been extended to their homes. Their primary concern was for the Bridford Parkway extension to create the minimum possible impact on their property and their neighborhood. These concerns have been forwarded to the project engineer. The Environmental Assessment for this project is scheduled for completion in Fall 2002, after which, another public meeting will be held. Right-of-way acquisition will begin in 2005.

Current Studies – Tyler Meyer informed the Committee that the Airport Area Transportation Plan deserves further discussion. To help the process along, Statewide Planning has agreed to write up results of the work that has been done to date. A meeting will be held at the PART offices, and the results will be available at the next TAC meeting.

Regarding the airport area, Mayor Holliday inquired whether it would be possible to install signage to direct traffic from South Regional Road to Bryan Boulevard, via Market Street and Burgess Road, as a parallel alternate route to NC 68. Mike Mills indicated that the intent was for the majority of traffic to use NC 68.

Jim Westmoreland asked Doug Galyon if there was any way he could possibly assist with freeing up funds to help fill the MPO's coordinator position. Doug Galyon asked that Jim Westmoreland draft a letter to him, and in turn, he would take the letter to Raleigh.

Enhancements Program – Tyler Meyer advised that this flexible program provides for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, preservation or rehabilitation of historic transportation structures, landscaping projects, and other projects to improve both transportation and other aspects of our communities such as aesthetics. The Multi-Modal Transportation Center is a notable recipient of enhancement funds, as is Guilford County, which last year received a \$755,000 grant for the section of the Bicentennial Trail that crosses I-40. This was the third largest award for FY 2003. NCDOT has issued a call for projects, due at the end of June. In order to apply, any local government from the area needs to get the MPO's endorsement. Information is being forwarded to member agencies that may be interested, and also to the towns in the MPO area. The applications submitted will be reviewed at the June TAC meeting. GDOT currently anticipates submitting a grant request for the section of the Battleground Rail Trail between Pisgah Church Road and Markland Drive.

Air Quality – Jeff Sovich advised the committee that the EPA released Mobile6, its new mobile vehicle emissions model, in January of 2002. Shortly thereafter, NCDOT circulated its recommendations to the MPOs and other users of the model. The model will be used in development of the state implementation plan, and the mobile vehicle emissions budgets for air quality determinations. The model is significant to the MPO because it's used in setting the area's air quality attainment and conformity levels, and in turn, the MPO's funding depends significantly on achieving those levels.

For comparison, the Mobile5 model projected increasing emissions of contaminants over the next 25 years, while Mobile6 projects exhibit significant decreases in the emissions. These decreases are a result of automobile emission control equipment remaining operable and efficient longer than was anticipated at the time the Mobile5 model was developed. Instead of emissions rising in conjunction with increasing vehicles miles traveled, the emissions are decreasing. The projected reduction in VOC is 63%, and 72% in oxides of Nitrogen, both expressed in kilograms per day. This model is used to develop the area's mobile vehicle emissions budget. In light of the decrease in emissions projected by Mobile6, NCDOT recommends that emissions budgets be set at the 2015 levels, so that MPOs are able to meet the highest possible emissions projection that is available.

Mr. Sovich stated that the recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals validated the EPA's new standards for fine particulate matter and eight-hour ozone level. The court ruled that the EPA did not act beyond its legislative authority, and that the data and procedures used to develop those standards were valid. The new standards reflect EPA's assertion that fine particulate matter and ozone are contaminants with no safe threshold at which there is no risk of health effects.

Sovich described the timeline for completion of non-attainment designations and conformity determinations. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will release guidance on the standards for implementation of EPA's new PM 2.5 and Ozone standards by December of 2002. DENR will then perform modeling and submit its designation area recommendations to EPA within 3 to 6 months. Next, EPA will determine final conformity designation areas within 120 days from that submittal, and EPA's conformity analysis will be completed within 1 to 2 years of that submittal. In other words, under this scenario the MPO could expect a conformity determination under the new Particulate Matter and Ozone standards between July 2004 and October 2005.

Other Items

1. Board Member Update

Doug Galyon informed the Committee regarding the construction project on I-40, that Santaro has withdrawn from North Carolina, and that the NCDOT has invited the contractor not to bid again. APAC Carolina has undertaken completion of that segment of I-40 from High Point Road to Chimney Rock Road, and it is their intention and goal to have four lanes open by December, 2002. NCDOT has offered incentives to Odebrecht Construction, which is under contract to construct the section of I-40 from Chimney Rock Road to Sandy Ridge Road, to have at least three lanes open by December. The Urban Loop section from I-40 to Bryan Boulevard will be delayed by one fiscal year, but this should not have an adverse effect because it translates to matter of a few months.

Mr. Galyon also advised the Committee that the Secretary is going to be asking the legislature introduce a measure to establish a Toll Road Authority. The Authority would be granted power to build and operate toll roads, condemn property, and issue bonds. A similar bill passed through the House during the 2001 legislative session, so this new authority is likely to pass during this legislative session. Toll roads themselves are not a complete answer to traffic congestion issues in the state, but they could be a powerful congestion management tool for areas experiencing high traffic volumes. More importantly however, because they would be paid for with user fees, toll roads would be a revenue-neutral means of providing and maintaining highway capacity.

Galyon also explained that the Secretary is proposing that NCDOT's design-build authorization be expanded. Traditionally, NCDOT fully designs transportation projects prior to receiving bids and awarding projects to contractors. Under the design-build process, contractors perform the design and construction work under one contract, allowing innovation and efficiency to reduce project delivery time. The Department's current authorization to select three design-build projects each year would be expanded to an unlimited number of design-build projects, from the smallest to the largest contracts. The projects selected would be limited to those that are least environmentally sensitive. Expanding this program would reduce construction costs and greatly accelerate the delivery of transportation projects in areas where they're needed the most. The Department has a 25-year inventory of projects, which could be delivered much earlier through an expanded design-build authority.

2. Town Reports

None.

3. Regional Update

None, due to the in-depth discussion of PART TIP items.

4. Wrap-Up Items

Mayor Keith Holliday asked when the Norwalk Street Extension project would be completed. Jim Westmoreland advised the Committee that Phase I of the project from Patterson Street to Boston Road would begin in Fall 2002 and be completed in 2004-2005.

Jim Westmoreland asked if the Pegg/Thatcher Road feasibility study had been completed. Doug Galyon remarked that he had not heard anything from NCDOT and that they may not have enough staff at present to complete the study. Westmoreland indicated that the MPO could take responsibility for completing this study. Galyon asked Westmoreland to follow-up with a letter stating the MPO's interest in taking over the study.

Tyler Meyer advised that the May meeting may not be necessary, but that he would contact all TAC members if that decision were made.

The TAC adjourned at 4:42 p.m.